GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:697
ANSWERED ON:13.05.2005
BPL CENSUS
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Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the criteria to identify BPL families fixed by the Planning Commission is serving its purpose;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is a discrepancy between the data provided by Central and State agencies; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in Reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.697 due for answer on 13.05.2005.

As per information furnished by the Planning Commission they do not fix the criteria for identification of poor. However, based on the recommendations of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor (Lakdawala Committee), it estimates state-specific poverty lines, derived from the national level poverty line, using state-specific price indices and inter-state price differentials. After carefully considering the representations of the various States, the Planning Commission has decided to continue with the Expert Group methodology.

2. The Ministry of Rural Development provides financial and technical assistance to the States and UTs to conduct a Below Poverty Line (BPL) Census with a view to identifying the households living below the poverty line in the rural areas who could be provided assistance under various programmes of the Ministry. The methodology for BPL Census 1992 and 1997 was based on income and expenditure approach respectively. However, for BPL Census, 2002, a score based methodology based on 13 socio-economic indicators has been adopted on the basis of the recommendations of the Expert Group constituted for the purpose. The 13 socio-economic parameters include land holding, shelter, clothes, food security, sanitation, consumer items, education, means of livelihood and indebtedness. The present methodology, which was finalized after a wide range of deliberations with the various Central Ministries, State Governments and prominent experts in the field, helps arrange all the rural households in the order of poverty.

3. While the methodology used by the Planning Commission is for estimating the number and proportion of the poor, the BPL Census assisted by this Ministry is conducted by the State Governments to help them in identifying the likely beneficiaries under the schemes of this Ministry. Apparently, there will be differences in the two sets of numbers due to Sample method and Census method. The guidelines issued for BPL Census, 2002 provide adequate flexibility to the States to identify the likely beneficiaries by taking into account the regional and local variations.